

A SUMMIT OF OPPORTUNITY:

How NADO Members Can Bring the
\$1.3 Trillion Outdoor Recreation Industry
to Life in their Communities

October 22, 2026



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NATHAN REIGNER

Director
Pennsylvania Office of
Outdoor Recreation

Chair
Confluence of States

ORR OUTDOOR RECREATION ROUNDTABLE



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CHRIS PERKINS
Vice President of
Programs

Matt Perry column: Lawmakers should invest in outdoor recreation and conservation

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DNR's next round of state park infrastructure projects includes more than \$108 million in ARPA investments
Revitalization Across Pennsylvania

Pa. investing millions in outdoor recreation, launches new dedicated office

Why these 5 communities in Illinois believe

Local
mil

Linnabary: Utah's Economic Growth Depends on the Outdoors

Commission Funding, solar pa

The Perf

Rail trail expansion builds dreams that Freeport and Kittanning could rival GAP Trail destinations

Gov. Whitmer approves \$45.6 million in recreation development and acquisition

Million in Grants for Parks and Recreation Projects Statewide

DEVELOPING FROM WITHIN:
OLD FORT'S BLACK COMMUNITY IS CREATING OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL AREAS TO

Partnership formed with goal to make Minnesota a top 10 state in outdoor recreation

March 10, 2023

OUTDOOR RECREATION IMPROVES QUALITY OF LIFE



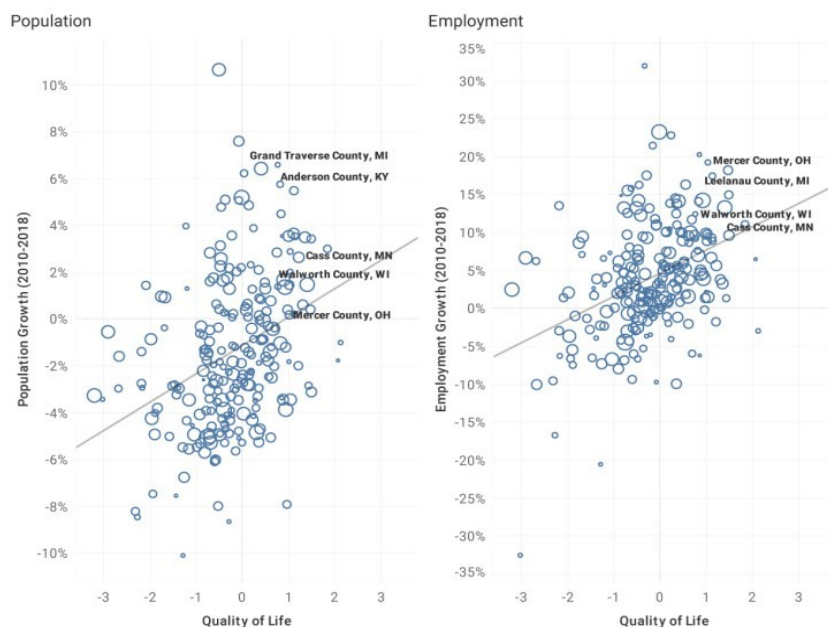
*“But now there is compelling new data that these **traditional economic development tools** may be ineffective compared to investments in quality of life and place.*

*Our research on smaller communities has found that community amenities such as **recreation opportunities**, cultural activities, and excellent services (e.g., good schools, transportation options) are likely bigger contributors to healthy local economies than traditional “business-friendly” measures.”*

BROOKINGS

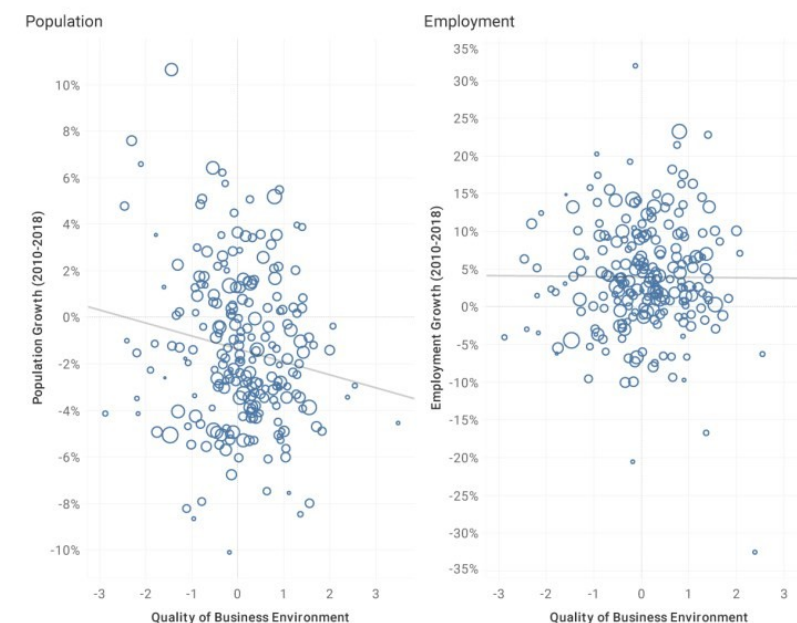
OUTDOOR RECREATION IMPROVES QUALITY OF LIFE

Figure 1. Higher quality of life is associated with higher population and employment growth



Source: Authors' calculations using Census Bureau data

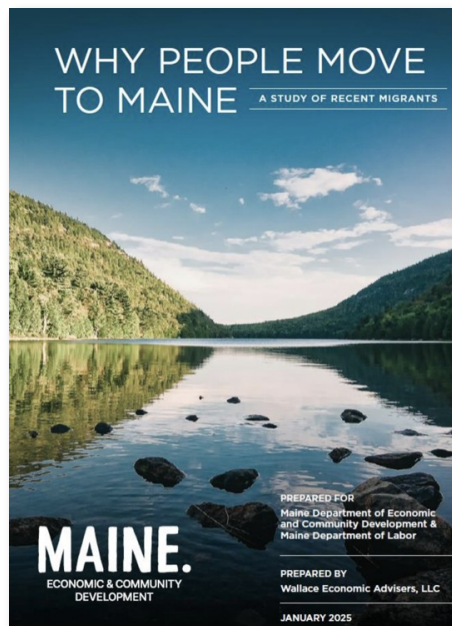
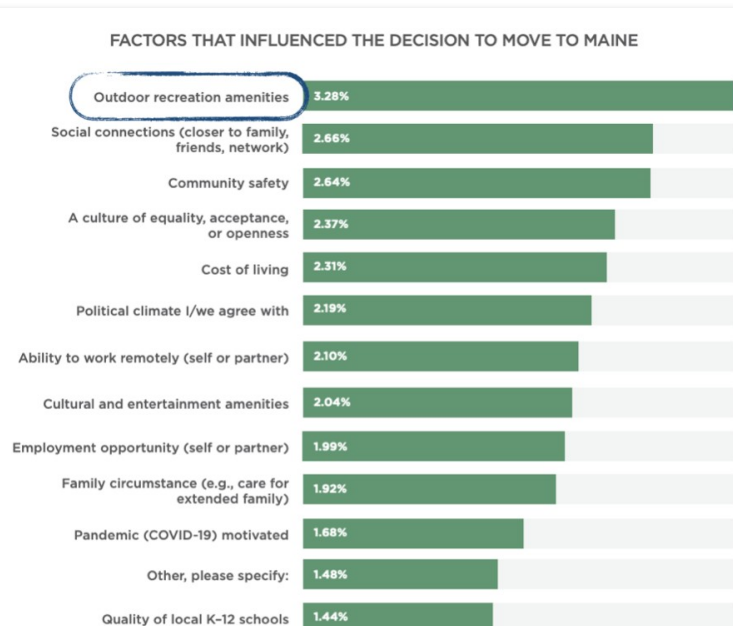
Figure 2. Higher quality of business environment is not associated with higher population or employment growth



Source: Authors' calculations using Census Bureau data

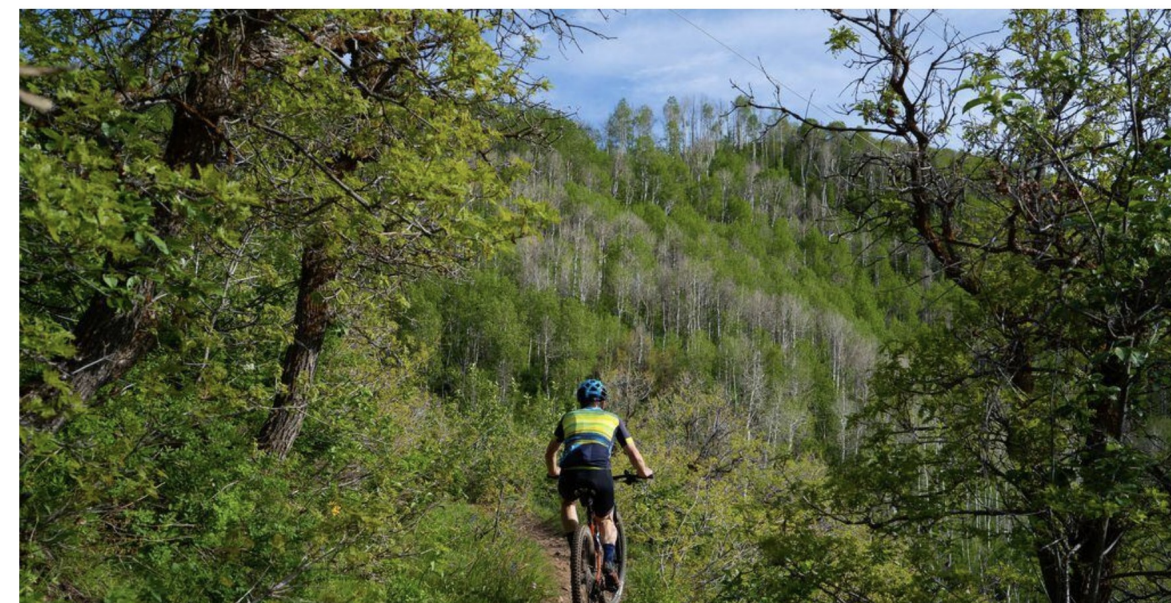
Where are you located?





The outdoors is Utah tech firms’ No. 1 recruiting tool

State leaders extol the economic importance of “protecting and preserving” Utah’s outdoor opportunities.





Vitamin D

Creativity

Improved Childhood Development

Mental Health and Cognitive Clarity

Physical Strength and Mobility

Gut Biome Resilience

Rates of Myopia

Loneliness

Cortisol Levels

Cardiovascular Disease



What The Research Shows About Time Outside



American Nature and Health Survey

Americans go outside to take breaks and feel better.



Biggest barriers to time in nature



AMERICA'S OUTDOOR ERA

**Outdoor Recreation Roundtable's Vision
for a Healthier America**

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Current State Offices of Outdoor Recreation





THANK YOU

Purveyors



Professionals



Providers

Producers



**Economic competitiveness
through quality of life**



**Cost savings from
public health improvement
and green infrastructure**



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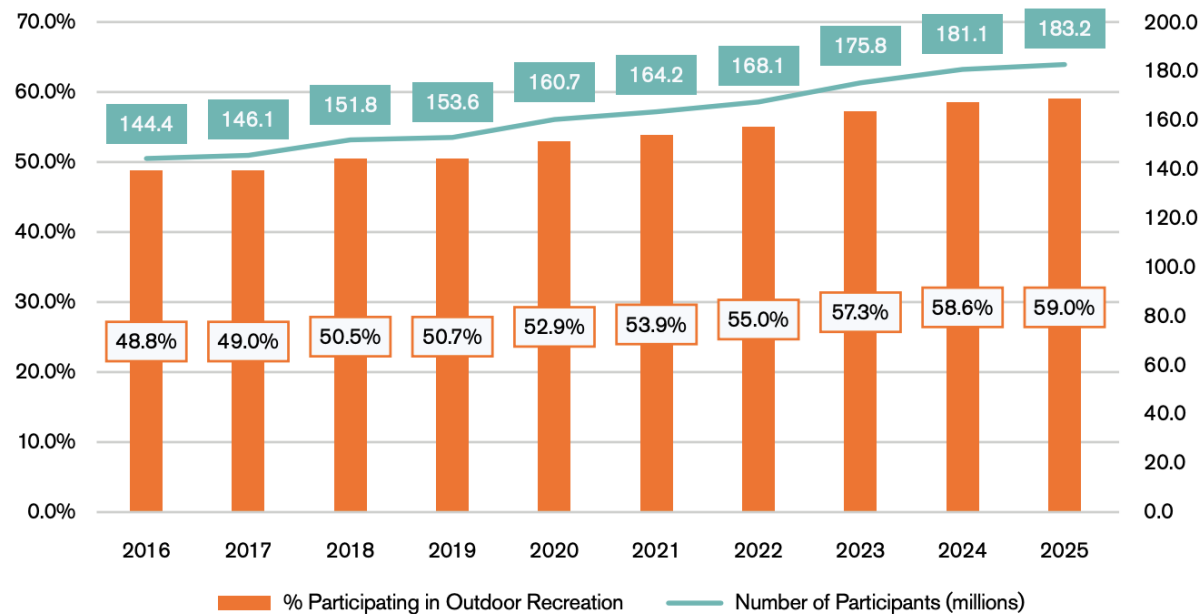


Reno, Nevada Riverwalk

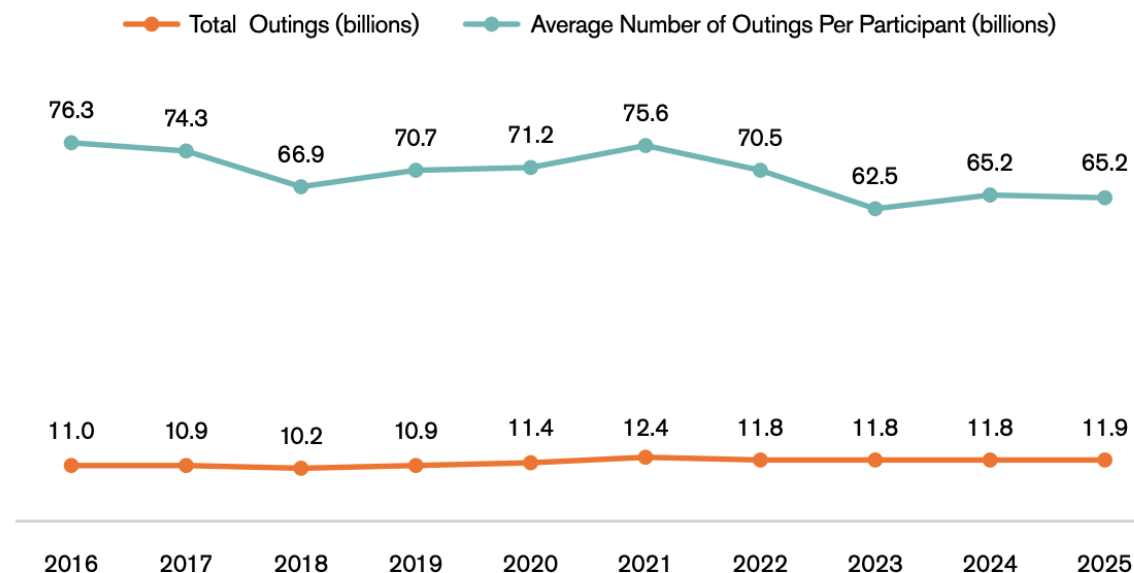


Red Rock National Conservation Area

OUTDOOR RECREATION PARTICIPATION RATES AND COUNTS, 2016 TO 2025



TOTAL OUTINGS (BILLIONS) AND AVERAGE OUTINGS PER PARTICIPANT, 2016 TO 2025



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This rural Pa. county has no public gym. A retired banker has a \$20M plan.

Rural areas, traditionally, have fewer health and wellness facilities and experts believe that affects obesity rates there.

 Add The Inquirer on Google



Mary Blondy, of The Loyalsock Foundation, envisions a state-of-the art wellness center, with a pool and meditation area, in rural Sullivan County.



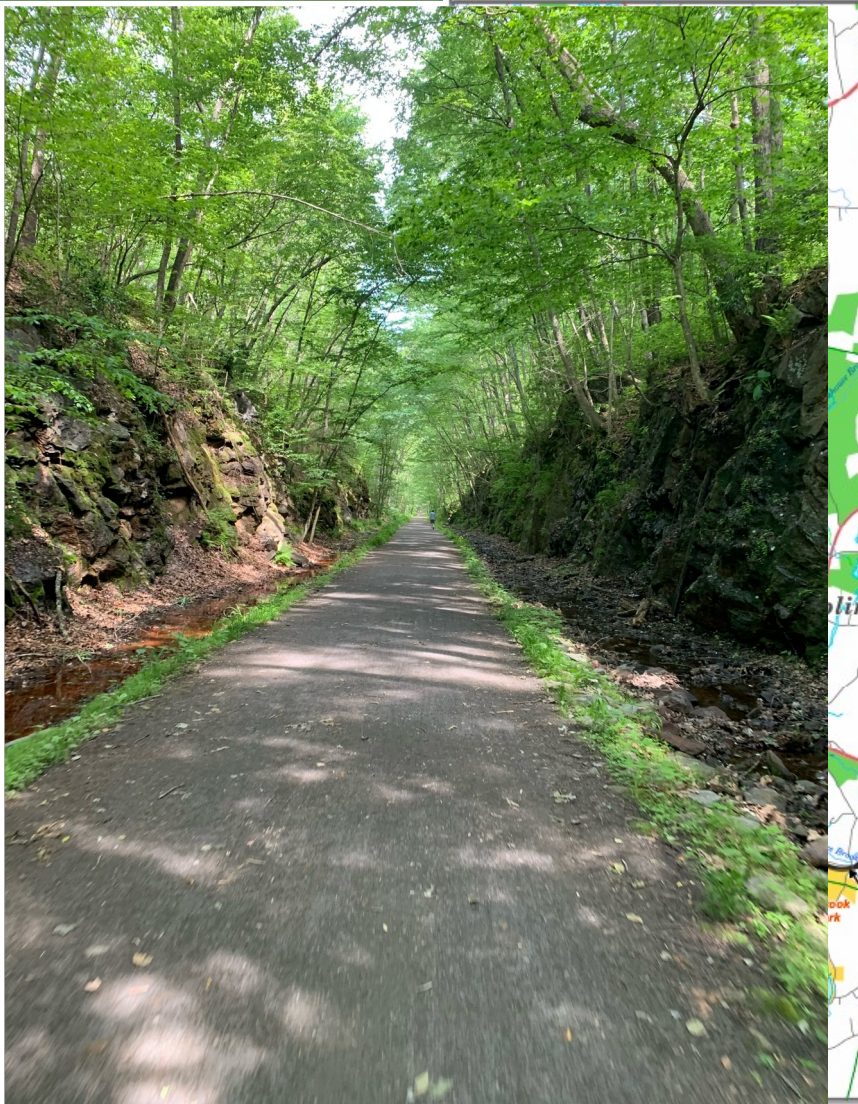
82% of Pennsylvanians report that outdoor recreation is an essential part of their mental health

Recreation as an essential part of the overall healthcare system shows a high level of support across Pennsylvania; however, with national attention growing on the mental health crisis, Pennsylvanians are showing a slight edge of support for recreation as an essential part of the mental health care system. There are numerous reports that show access to outdoor recreation is beneficial for both mental and physical

health, with various health indicators improving such as cortisol levels decreasing after light to moderate exercise in natural settings. Pennsylvanians support strong connections between recreation spaces and health care, and with many healthcare locations creating paths around their facilities or sponsoring outdoor recreation programs the health care industry seems to show the same association. However, there is a need for

greater collaboration on programming and research into the benefits outdoor recreation provides to both mental and physical wellbeing of Pennsylvanians.

67% of Pennsylvanians agree that parks, trails, and open space are an essential part of the healthcare system



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Audience Q&A



We are in the
Business of Joy
